GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2091
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2003
MEMORY PILLS
M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the doctors have warned that memory pills increase nervousness, irritability, anxiety and physical tremors instead of boosting attention and comprehension as reported in the Times of India dated January 17, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to discourage the use of these pills?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The term `memory pills` has no scientific basis, and it is used for a variety of drugs which claim/are erroneously believed to enhance memory. The most commonly used drugs for `boosting attention and comprehension` are the amphetamines and methylphenidate. Both these drugs are potentially dangerous and can cause heightened anxiety, restlessness/agitation, sleeplessness and even psychosis (abnormal behaviour, delusions, and hallucinations). They are also addictive and often lead to abuse.

The use of amphetamines is currently banned and methylphenidate is available only from selected outlets under strict medical control/prescription for specific indications such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children above 6 years age.